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GEORGIAN FOUNDATION FOR STRATEGIC
AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES.

RUSSIAN EXPANSION IN THE CAUCASUS AND GEORGIA

The Expansion
of Russia in the
Caucasus and Georgia
project offers the
readers collection
of scientific-popular
articles which
aims to cover the
Georgian-Russian
relations of the
XVIII-XX centuries
in a manner different
from the widely
propagated
perspective of the
official Russia.

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Otar Janelidze

GEORGIA IN THE GERMAN ORBIT



Tbilisi, Neu-Tiflis, Michael Avenue (Aghmashenebeli Avenue in present)

Georgian-German relations did not originate on an uncultivated soil in 1918-1921 – they were preceded by a long and interesting history. Georgia's contacts with the German world in the past were at best episodic, but the situation changed in the 19th century when the Russian administration of the Caucasus resettled the Württemberg Schwab colonists on the territory of Georgia, which at the time was incorporated into the Russian Empire. New German settlements were established near Sartichala (Marienfeld), Tbilisi on the left bank of the Mtkvari (Neu-Tiflis) and Didube (Alexandersdorf), Bolnisi (Katerinenfeld), Asureti (Elizabethal), and others. The German emigrants, who established more than 20 colonies in Georgia, were mainly engaged in agriculture, producing beer and cheese, and pursuing various crafts. They were also responsible for the opening of the first European-type hotels in Tbilisi and the start of a hotel business (Friedrich Salzmann, Jakob Wetzell), as well as pharmaceutical activities (Flor Schonberg, Eugene Zemel)¹, production of passenger and freight carts, and more.

Close to the heart of Georgian history are the names of German architects Otto Simonson and Albert Salzmann; artists Oscar and Rene Schmerling; naturalist Gustav Rade;² traveler-botanist Karl Koch; brothers Walter, Otto, and Carl Siemens,³ and numerous others.

In 1906, the German-language newspaper *Kaukasische Post* was first published in Tbilisi, edited by writer and journalist Arthur Leist. Leist came to Georgia in 1884 at the invitation of Ilia Chavchavadze. He visited the following year as well, and after his third trip, he decided to settle in Tbilisi in 1892. Leist thereafter devoted his life to the study and popularization of Georgian culture, history, ethnography, and literature, and was actively involved in the public life of the country, becoming friends with not only Ilia Chavchavadze, but also Niko Nikoladze, Akaki Tsereteli, and Iona Meunargia. He dedicated a number of books to Georgia, including: "Georgia, Nature, Customs, and Population," "Georgian

¹ M. Tsereteli, "germaneblbi sakartveloshi" (Germans in Georgia) <https://www.gfsis.org › files › my-world › 8.pdf>

² Gustav Rade was the director of the Caucasus Museum in Tbilisi, as well as the Tbilisi Public Library.

³ Siemens' firm "Siemens and Halske" started the development of telegraph in Georgia.



Tbilisi, St. Peter and Paul Lutheran church on Michael Avenue, designed by Otto Simonson in 1891, supervised by Leopold Bielfeld



Tbilisi, Hotel Wetzel on Michael Avenue, designed by Leopold Bielfeld in 1897-1900



Arthur Leist



People," and "Heart of Georgia." He published an anthology of Georgian poetry in German, and, with the help of Ilia Chavchavadze and Ivane Machabeli, translated into German "The Knight in the Tiger's Skin" (Vepkhistaosani) by Shota Rustaveli, publishing it in Dresden and Leipzig in 1890.⁴

In 1818, a German primary school was established at the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tbilisi, which was later transformed into a gymnasium.⁵ In it, many Georgians studied German and received an education alongside Germans. It is noteworthy that the German colonists also spoke Georgian fluently. After their mother tongue, their second language was Georgian.⁶

The advanced, educated representatives of the Georgian nation were well acquainted with the German culture, the rich and meaningful literature of the country, as well as

its achievements, and they greatly appreciated the best qualities of the German people.

The attractiveness of German culture among the Georgian youth of the early twentieth century increased significantly. Its prestige was not less than the one enjoyed by the French culture for the generation of Niko Nikoladze and Sergi Meskhi. "Germany is where our future Georgian luminary should grow up. Here is the depth of the soul, the thought, the philosophy, the science, and the supreme poetry ... Schiller's humanism and Nietzsche's cruelty converge here. Our Georgians also, must deeply understand and uphold those two principles of life," Sandro Shanshiashvili wrote in.⁷

Around the same time, Konstantine Gamsakhurdia, who was in Königsberg, urged the Georgian nation to emulate the distinctive features of the German character – "firm performance of duty, national pride, reliance on one's own strength."⁸ The German heroism and messianic paths

⁴ Otar Janelidze, Mirian Khositashvili, Levan Taktakishvili, *bechdviti sitkva tbilisshi (1918-1921) (Print Media in Tbilisi (1918-1921))*, Tbilisi, 2020, 154.

⁵ The gymnasium was closed by the Soviet authorities in 1925.

⁶ J. Mosidze, "Zur Geschichte und zu den sprachlichen Besonderheiten der Schwaben in Georgien", *Zweites Deutsch-Georgisches Symposium der Berliner Georgische Gesellschaft e.V* Mai 1997, 105-106.

⁷ Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature, S. Shanshiashvili Foundation, case N5558-b.

⁸ L. Avaliani, "konstantine gamsakhurdia kenigsbergshi" (Konstantine Gamsakhurdia in Königsberg), *Journal Kartuli mtserloba* (Georgian Writing), 1990, N1, 146.

*Sandro Shanshiashvili**Konstantine
Gamsakhurdia*

were not foreign to Georgians either, as our publicists often pointed out.

Germany's political interest vis-à-vis Georgia, which was mainly due to the strategic location of the country and to some extent its mineral wealth, coincides with the pre-World War I period. In preparation for the Great War, the South Caucasus, in particular Georgia, came into the focus of the Kaiser's government. The German imperial court was well aware of the internal difficulties of its rival states, including the Russian Empire. In order to crack down on Russia's statehood and weaken its military might, a proper plan was devised at the German Foreign Ministry and General Staff: Germany was to support the conquered small nations fighting to escape the tyranny of tsarism. In this way, it was intended to separate Poland, Ukraine, and the Caucasus from the Romanov Empire. The plan was endorsed by Reich Chancellor Bethmann Hollweg and Wilhelm II himself.

Restoration of Georgia's state independence was put on the agenda, but the German authorities would not be able to resolve the issue without the involvement of the Georgians. As such, it was necessary to identify a group or force sympathetic to this idea in Georgia on which further work could be. The relevant agencies of the Kaiser did not need to search long, though, as the Georgians approached the Germans themselves.

It is known that after the defeat of the People's Revolution of 1905-1907, due to persecution by the totalitarian government, many Georgian activists sought shelter abroad. Most of them settled in Switzerland, and it was there in Geneva that the "Group for Independent Georgia" was formed in 1910, uniting Petre Surguladze, Leo and Giorgi Kereselidze, Varlam Cherkezishvili, Mikhako Tsereteli, and others. The group aimed to separate Georgia completely from the Russian Empire and establish it as an independent state.

In the autumn of 1914, the Group for Independent Georgia, led by Petre Surguladze, established the "Georgian Liberation Committee" (also known as the "Georgian Independence Committee") in Geneva. The members of the committee approached the German Foreign Ministry and

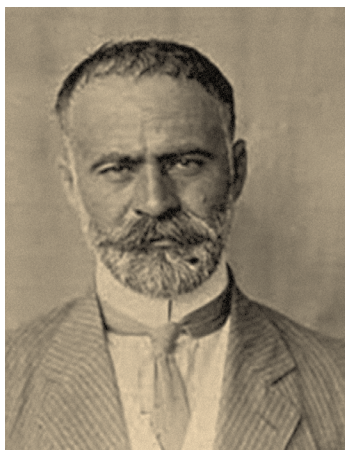
conveyed their political aspirations: the committee would choose a German orientation if Germany, in case of victory in the war, were to support Georgia's independence. Following the negotiations, the German authorities accepted the committee's proposal. An agreement was soon reached between the German government and the Georgian Liberation Committee. Germany pledged to help Georgia achieve its independence and expressed its readiness to recognize its sovereignty if the central states succeeded in the war, and Georgia would thus be able to declare independence.

This was the first time that Georgia's aspirations – to find an ally in Europe, went beyond the framework of moral sympathy from the great powers and continued in business relations. Germany financed the full activity of the Georgian Liberation Committee, ensured the formation of a Georgian legion within the Ottoman territory, imported weapons into Georgia by submarines, and more.⁹

Independently from the members of the Committee, the idea of establishing communication with the German Imperial Court also occurred to Giorgi Machabeli, who was in Belgium. Machabeli graduated from the Mining Academy in Berlin, where he met and befriended numerous members of the German aristocracy. According to Shalva Maghlakelidze, "Giorgi was an approachable man. He had lordly ancestry and managed to establish himself among the princes as a "Furst"... Using his dignity and resourcefulness, he approached the princes – the young Hohenzollerns, the Wittelsbachs of Bavaria – and became friends with them." This paved the way for the Georgian count to reach the highest levels of government in Germany, contacts which he used wisely as he sought Georgian independence.

Machabeli suggested that after the liberation, a monarchy should be established in Georgia, headed by a German prince. The prince on the throne of Georgia would marry a Georgian woman and thus begin a new royal dynasty.

⁹ L. Bakradze, *germanul-kartuli urtiertobebi pirveli msoplio omis dros (kartuli erovnuli komitetis sakmianoba 1914-1918 tslebshi)* (German-Georgian Relations during the First World War (Activities of the Georgian National Committee 1914-1918), Tbilisi, 2009.



Petre Surguladze



Giorgi Machabeli

Wilhelm II's youngest son, Prince Joachim, was chosen to reign in Georgia, while the Queen was to be Marine Machabeli, a close relative of Giorgi.¹⁰

At the beginning of the First World War, while anti-German hysteria spread throughout Russia, Germanophile aspirations were noticeable in Georgian magazines, newspapers, ideological groups, and intellectual circles: almost the entire Georgian political elite was focused on Germany.

The success of the Georgians' long struggle for national-political freedom on May 26, 1918, was made possible with the direct participation and active support of Germany. As soon as state independence was declared, Germany recognized Georgia's sovereignty and undertook the obligation to protect it. It was this fact that prompted Shalva Amirejibi to say that "the midwife of Georgia's independence was Germany."

Despite all this, the issue of Joachim Hohenzollern becoming king in Georgia was not raised seriously either in Tbilisi or in Berlin, and thus Giorgi Machabeli's plan failed and the marriage of the German prince and Marine Machabeli did not take place. A turn of fate took the prince to the Netherlands, while Marine continued her life in Italy, marrying the Italian consul in the Democratic Republic of Georgia and settling in Rome after 1921.¹¹

The first state with which the Democratic Republic of Georgia established political relations was Kaiser's Germany. As we have noted, Germany gave the Georgian people the opportunity to restore the national statehood abolished 117 years prior, and also saved Georgia from the real threat of Ottoman occupation. On May 28, 1918, a document was signed in Poti titled "Interim Agreement between Germany and Georgia on the Establishment of Mutual Relations in Advance," by virtue of which the German Empire de facto recognized the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its government. Moreover, due to the state of war, the agreement regulated military, financial, and trade issues between the two countries.

Based on the Poti Agreement, an official Georgian delegation led by Foreign Minister Akaki Chkhenkeli soon visited Berlin. A Georgian-German "Friendship, Economic, and Legal Agreement" was drafted, which, although not signed,¹² laid the foundation for mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

It should be noted that even the German Reichstag, where, according to one German expert, out of the entire cohort only about thirty knew where Georgia was located, showed great interest and met with sympathy the establishment of friendly relations between Germany and Georgia.¹³

In June 1918, with the consent of the Government of the Democratic Republic, two Bavarian units of 1,800 troops entered Georgia.¹⁴ The combat units were accompanied by a German military-diplomatic mission led by General Friedrich Sigmund Kress von Kressenstein, who settled in the former Mukhranbatoni Palace on Rustaveli Avenue in Tbilisi. Count Friedrich Werner von der Schulenburg played a prominent role in the mission, having held the post of German Vice-Consul in Tbilisi from 1911-1914; and afterwards being closely associated with the Georgian Liberation Committee and its Georgian Legion.

During a ceremonial meeting of the German mission in Tbilisi on June 26, 1918, General von Kressenstein stated, "We were brought to the ancient land of the Caucasus not only for military purposes, but also with the great desire to help the Georgian people restore their ancient statehood and independence ... We came to your country as friends and will protect your territory, we will create conditions that will strengthen the Georgian nation ... We are here not in victory, but as friends, and this is the basis for our further coopera-

¹⁰ O. Janelidze, *dakhvretili tavisupleba (Shot Liberty)*, Tbilisi, 2000, 31-32.

¹¹ *ibid.*, 26-33.

¹² D. Paichadze, "germania-sakartvelos arshemdgari dokumenti" (Germany-Georgia Failed Document), *Tsiskari*, 2000, N 6, 132.

¹³ Z. Avalishvili, *sakartvelos damoukidebloba 1918-1921 tslebis saertashoriso politikashi (The Independence of Georgia in International Politics, 1918-1921)*, Tbilisi, 1925, 116; 122.

¹⁴ Later the German contingent, which consisted almost entirely of Bavarian troops, increased to about 19,000 fighters. See G. Astamadze, "Georgian-German relations in 1918-1921 years" <http://german-georgian.archive.ge/ka/blog/5>

tion.”¹⁵ At the same meeting, his words were confirmed by Arthur Leist, “Georgians, so far you had only one German friend in my person, and now the whole of Germany is your friend! Long live independent Georgia.”¹⁶

Upon arrival in Tbilisi, German officers visited important Georgian sites, including the museums of the Historical-Ethnographic and Literacy Society. They discovered the ornamental culture, Georgian weaponry and manuscripts, and were mesmerized by what they saw. They were particularly interested in the paintings of Mose Toidze, Gigo Gabashvili, and other Georgian artists.¹⁷ It was clear from the behaviour of the Germans that representatives of a civilized nation had entered the country, one that had a positive attitude towards the Georgian people, with their great and original past; one that valued the country's national treasure and was ready to contribute to the further enrichment of Georgian culture and education.

Several examples can be used to illustrate this:

1. Through the efforts of the German National Council in Georgia and the Georgian intelligentsia, especially compatriots educated in Germany, a German-Georgian Cultural Society was established in Tbilisi in July 1918. It aimed to establish relations between the two nations, bring their cultures closer together, and build dialogue. The creation of the society was supported by both the government of the Democratic Republic and the official German representation in Georgia;¹⁸

2. The German government established 10 scholarships for Georgian students in August 1918. Each amounted to 15,000 Marks;¹⁹ At the same time, the Ettal Abbey in Bavaria sent several Georgian children to the gymnasium at its own expense;²⁰

3. The Berlin publication *Der Neue Orient* founded the Georgian literary and scientific magazine *Europe's Moambe*, which was edited by Konstantine Gamsakhurdia and Giorgi Kereselidze²¹ together with the German Kartvelologist Richard McClellan (the magazine could not be published due to the revolution in Germany²²).

The issue of allocating 50 million Marks to Georgia, the Chiatura manganese concession, the operation of the Poti port and other projects by German firms and companies, were on the agenda. As Konstantin Kandelaki wrote, the German “plans for the economic revival of our country were very broad and comprehensive; they covered both the financial and the common economic aspects of our nation-



Friedrich-Werner Graf von der Schulenburg on the balcony of the German Consulate in Tbilisi, 1918

al industry. From solving the issue of money (loans for the principal amount of the emission bank) to the use of white coal, improving the means of transportation, and arranging the technical side of foreign trade.” These projects “primarily meant the existence of an independent republic of Georgia and its full sovereignty.” Sadly, they were not able to implement them.²³

The German military also earned the goodwill of Georgian society. When the Ottoman Askeri invaded the Borchalo Mazra, German soldiers fought against them alongside Georgian units and repealed the enemy. This clash claimed the lives of several Germans, who were buried in the German cemetery near Avchala Street in Tbilisi.

It should be emphasized that the Germans had nothing to do with the formation of the government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Similarly, they refrained from interfering in the internal affairs of the country later on. Therefore, it was tendentious for Lenin to describe the entry of German troops into Georgia as “the occupation and complete conquest of Georgia by the German imperialists.” However, this idea invariably dominated Soviet historiography. The Germans were called occupiers, imperialists, colonizers, and so on. Much was written on this subject, particularly during the years of World War II. In the books, agitation brochures and publications of the time, the German units invited to Georgia in support of Georgian sovereignty were equated to Nazi invaders, ones who supposedly played the role of executioners; as punitive detachments which had the Georgian government completely enslaved.

To be completely honest, the deployment of the German military contingent in Georgia was followed by several unpleasant events. General von Kressenstein himself noted that the protracted war had left its mark on the discipline and morale of the German troops. Some military units entered Georgia, including the Bavarian light cavalry, and the Prussian Battalion, and had problems with discipline, the

¹⁵ Г. Пипия, *Германский империализм в Закавказье в 1910-1918 гг.*, М., 1978, 106.

¹⁶ Newspaper *Sakhalkho Sakme* (Public Affairs), June 28, 1918.

¹⁷ Newspaper *Sakhalkho Sakme*, June 30, 1918.

¹⁸ Newspaper *Sakartvelos Respublika* (Republic of Georgia), July 26, 1918.

¹⁹ Newspaper *Ertoba* (Union), August 27, 1918.

²⁰ Newspaper *Sakartvelo* (Georgia), May 30, 1918.

²¹ Newspaper *Sakhalkho Sakme*, November 1, 1918.

²² G. Astamadze, “konstantine gamsakhurdia germaniashi” (Konstantine Gamsakhurdia in Germany 1912-1919), *Journal Kartuli emigratsia* (Georgian Emigration), 2018-2019, N5 (8), 33.

²³ K. Kandelaki, *sakartvelos erovnuli meurneoba. damoukidebeli sakartvelo: misi sotsialuri da ekonomikuri mdgomareoba* (Georgian National Industry. Independent Georgia: Its Social and Economic Situation), Book Two, Paris, 1960, 184-185.



General Friedrich Siegmund Georg
Freiherr Kress von Kressenstein



A group of Georgian and German officers

latter becoming infamous for its "excessive violence and unrestrained actions." Despite instructions and orders, "the officers issued and enforced death sentences, imposed taxes, burned homes, confiscated cattle from individual villages, and so on." According to the General, "the most damage to the German authority in Georgia was done by the frequent news about the unpleasant behaviour of drunk German officers and soldiers unaccustomed to strong Caucasian wine, resulting in widespread dissatisfaction."²⁴

In spite of everything, it would be unfair to evaluate the aforementioned incidents as "unbridled behaviour" from the Germans.²⁵ Further research reveals that, personally, General von Kressenstein had a humane attitude towards the locals,²⁶ and that all sections of the Georgian population, including those in power or in opposition, expressed sympathy towards the Germans. For more clarity, let us review some relevant material:

"During the German stay, the activities of the Georgian people ... showed the grace of deep faith ... others" respect towards us made us respect ourselves. By its behaviour, Germany showed everyone that it was residing in the state. And our people were nurtured through this necessary feeling and sense," wrote the nationalist newspaper *Sali Klde* (Steep Cliff).²⁷

The Federalist *Sakhalkho Sakme* pointed out: "German aid has never stepped beyond friendly relations. The presence of the Germans in Georgia ... had another great significance: the neighbourhood of disciplined and highly polite people during the general disintegration and decay had an inevitable cultural significance for the state in the process of reconstruction."²⁸

The social-democratic *Borba* was of the same opinion. In one of its leading articles, the newspaper noted: "German troops came to our country to answer the call of Georgia's democracy. They came with two obligations: to protect the Republic of Georgia from invasion, and not to interfere in its internal affairs. The Georgian people will attest that Germany has fulfilled its obligations towards small Georgia and saved it from extinction and Ottoman slavery at a time of historical desperation."²⁹

"Georgia will not forget the German command and the work of the army in general. The Germans have left such a mark on the Georgian nation that it will never vanish from its heart and will be passed down to the coming generations as an example of honesty and sincerity," the national democratic newspaper *Sakartvelo* (Georgia) wrote.³⁰

"Direct policy, sincere promise, and vigorous defense of its word became the basis for the fact that during its entire stay here, the German state power was not a grave, but rather a cradle of our independence," noted Razhden Arsenidze.³¹

²⁴ Baron Friedrich Kress von Kressenstein, *My Mission in the Caucasus*, translated from German, historical notes, and comments attached by Nodar Mushkudian, Kutaisi, 2002, 114; 121.

²⁵ According to the periodical press, one evening two German soldiers in Tbilisi insulted several local women. The soldiers were immediately arrested. See Newspaper *Sakartvelos Respublika*, October 3, 1918.

²⁶ G. Astamadze, "Kresenstein Kress von Friedrich Sigmund Georg Freicher", *Democratic Republic of Georgia. Encyclopedia-Dictionary*, Tbilisi, 2018, 234.

²⁷ Newspaper *Sali Klde* (Steep Cliff), May 19, 1919.

²⁸ Newspaper *Sakhalkho Sakme*, October 26, 1918.

²⁹ Newspaper *Borba* (Fight), October 29, 1918.

³⁰ Newspaper *Sakartvelo*, November 7, 1918.

³¹ M. Dghvilava, *sakartvelo-germaniis urtiertoba 1018-1921 tslebshi* (Georgian-German Relations, 1918-1921), Candidate's dissertation, Tbilisi, 1997, 13.



German soldiers in Tbilisi

"The troops of the old German regime treated us here gently and did not violate the sovereignty of our nation at all," said Noe Zhordania, Chairman of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, at the plenary meeting of the Georgian Parliament,³² right after the fall of Wilhelm II, as Germans were forced to leave the country. Zhordania reiterated the same thought in his memoirs: "The command of the German troops showed an example of recognition of Georgia's sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. We are socialists and democrats, they are monarchists, gentry – the political and ideological difference was huge. Nevertheless, our relationship was loyal, friendly, and sincere."³³

In a book published in Tbilisi in 1920 – "A Small Book on Modern Georgia," we read – "Germany has not interfered in our domestic affairs and has sincerely fulfilled its promise entirely. Germany has saved our people from physical annihilation and this true story will be passed on to our grandchildren."³⁴

It is noteworthy that the aforementioned sincere words were uttered during the presence of British troops in Georgia, at a time when the command of these troops truly had an impact on the government of the Democratic Republic, and when it was even dangerous to publicly express gratitude to Germany. That is why these assessments are convincing and credible.

We can also rely on foreign authors. For example, according to ethnically Azerbaijani historian and professor at Yale University in the United States, Firuz Kazemzadeh, "Georgians equated the word 'German' with salvation. As soon as... German soldiers set foot on Georgian soil, its population breathed a sigh of relief."³⁵ British researcher J. Brinkley also confirms that Georgia successfully exercised its independence before the arrival of the British.³⁶

The following fact is also noteworthy: the defeat of the Kaiser and the central states in the World War forced Germany to withdraw its troops from Georgia. By the decision of the Supreme Allied Council, from December 1918, the regiments of the British Army were stationed in Georgia. While the latter tried to prevent the Germans from returning to their homeland, Georgian society did its best to give the friendly German army safe passage from the republic. The Georgian government, in the presence of a large crowd at the railway station, escorted the German echelons from Tbilisi with dignity, while in Kutaisi the Ministry of Defense held a banquet in their honour. As a sign of special gratitude, German soldiers and officers were awarded the Order of Queen Tamar for their contribution to the protection of Georgia's state independence.³⁷ An occupier and invader would not have been treated this way.

³² National Archives of Georgia, Central Historical Archive of Georgia, 1836/1/72, Fol. 2.

³³ N. Zhordania, *Chemi tsarsuli (My Past)*, Tbilisi, 1990, 91.

³⁴ *Patara tsigni tanamedrove sakartveloze (A Small Book on Modern Georgia)*, Tbilisi, 1920, 59.

³⁵ Firuz Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia 1917-1921*, Tbilisi, 2016, 186.

³⁶ A. Atanelashvili, *siskhlani gakvetilebi (Bloody Lessons)*, Tbilisi, 1999, 31.

³⁷ L. Bakradze, *germanul-kartuli urtiertobebi pirveli msolfio omis dros (kartuli erovnuli komitetis sakmianoba 1914-1918 tslebshi) (German-Georgian Relations during the First World War (Activities of the Georgian National Committee 1914-1918))*, 162.



Delegation of the Republic of Georgia to Germany; Sitting from left to right: Niko Nikoladze, Akaki Chkhenkeli and Zurab Avalishvili; Standing Spiridon Kedia, Giorgi Machabeli and Mikhako Tsereteli, 1918

In the words of the famous Georgian emigrant politician, journalist and researcher Viktor Nozadze: "The departure of friendly German troops from Georgia was a great tragedy for the Georgian nation, which lost a genuine protector."³⁸

The defeat of Germany in World War I, and its aftermath, also led to a correction in the political orientation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. "Germanophile" Foreign Minister Akaki Chkhenkeli was replaced by Evgeni Gegechkori. The political vector also changed, now turning towards the victorious allied states.

The rulers of the Democratic Republic were well aware that Germany had not acted unselfishly in Georgia. The publication of the newspaper *Ertoba* corroborates this, stating that "it would have been naivete to expect Germany's unselfish support of the Georgian Social-Democracy... The Germans came to Georgia not for the sake of the Social Democrats or the National Democrats, but for the sake of manganese, copper, timber, and other natural resources of the country."

Germany was driven by well-founded strategic, economic, and political interests in Georgia, but the important thing was that these interests did not undermine Georgia's sovereignty and were less at odds with its national aspirations. Germany's cooperation with the Georgian state was based on an acceptable and mutually favourable principle. This can be clearly seen from the book of the Minister of Finance and Trade-Industry of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, Konstantine Kandelaki, which was written in emigration to France, and as such there was nothing to compel the author to take a biased attitude towards Germany. In Kandelaki's words, "If at that time the Germans took advantage of anything during their entry and presence

in our country, it is fair to say that they settled the bill for everything."³⁹

It is difficult to say with certainty how the German-Georgian interdependence would have unfolded, and what concrete form it would have taken, had it lasted longer. For those 6-7 months, which are considered the most intense in the history of this relationship, it was a significant example of cooperation between the two countries based on goodwill, mutual benefit, and business activities.

In August 1920, the German government (Weimar Republic) established a diplomatic mission in Tbilisi, headed by Ernst von Druffel. One month later, Germany recognized Georgia's de jure state independence. Soon, an Embassy was established in Tbilisi and Dr. Ulrich Rauscher was sent as ambassador. The Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Georgia in Germany was also opened. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Vladimir Akhmetelashvili (Akhmeteli), an economist educated in Germany and a prominent member of the Social Democratic Party. Georgian-German relations after the Soviet occupation of Georgia, unfortunately, did not continue in this fashion.

The fact that Georgia regained its state independence with the support of Germany, and that Germany had a military contingent stationed in Georgia to defend the Georgian state, complicated the country's relations with the victorious allies of the WWI. The process of its international recognition was also delayed; however, it would have been unjustified for Georgian politicians to refuse German support and not to use the historic chance of restoring statehood on May 26, 1918, which might not have arisen at another time.

³⁸ Journal *Kartveli Eri* (Georgian Nation), 1944, May, N8/9, 4-5.

³⁹ K. Kandelaki, *sakartvelos erovnuli meurneoba, damoukidebeli sakartvelo: misi socialuri da ekonomikuri mdgomareoba* (Georgian National Industry. Independent Georgia: Its Social and Economic Situation), 184-185.